

# Senate Bill 520 (Steinberg)

## Partnerships for Online College Access and Completion

### SUMMARY

A faculty-led, quality-first framework aimed at creating partnerships between UC, CSU, CCC faculty and online course technology providers to provide students with more, high-quality online access for strategically selected lower-division courses.

### BACKGROUND

California's Higher Education Master Plan created a national model that sought to ensure high quality postsecondary education would be available to all. It ignited California's economic engine, created pathways to the middle class and, arguably, is responsible for California's prominent place in the world today in areas such as high technology.

Yet today, the great California systems are at a cross-road. California's public colleges and universities face skyrocketing demand at a time when they lack capacity to provide students with access to courses necessary for program completion and success. The obstacles to course access and completion threaten the foundational principles upon which the state's public higher education systems were built.

In the 2012-13 academic year, 85% of California Community Colleges reported wait lists for courses in fall 2012, with a statewide average of more than 7,000 students on wait lists per college. Similarly, impacted courses have contributed significantly to difficulties within the UC and CSU systems, with figures showing that only 60% and 16% of students, respectively, are able to earn a degree within four years, with lack of access to key courses a factor in increased time-to-degree.

A thoughtful and strategic harnessing of Silicon Valley's innovations in online education, in close partnership with talented UC, CSU, and CCC faculty can help California protect the Master Plan's foundations of access, quality, and affordability while addressing bottlenecks that hold many students back.

Today, California can benefit from a statutory framework that aims to provide students with sorely needed online access to strategically selected lower-division courses, puts quality first, and facilitates partnerships between UC, CSU, CCC faculty and

online course technology providers, to help California public colleges and universities meet demand in key areas.

### THIS BILL

Establishes an online student access platform administered jointly by the UC, CSU, CCC and their respective academic senates, for:

- Development of a list of the 50 most over-subscribed lower division courses at the UC, CSU, and the California Community Colleges that are deemed necessary for program completion, meeting general education requirements, or along the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum.
- By 2014, the facilitation of partnerships between UC, CSU, CCC faculty and online course technology providers for development of high-quality online options for the selected 50 courses.
- Placement of approved courses in a state-level pool, through which students could access courses and be awarded full academic credit for the comparable course at the UC, CSU, or California Community Colleges.
- When reviewing online courses for potential approval, the extent to which the course incorporates the following is to be considered:
  - ✓ Provides students an opportunity to assess his or her suitability for online learning prior to enrolling.
  - ✓ Provides students with instructional support and related services to promote retention and success.
  - ✓ Provides interaction between instructors and students.
  - ✓ Contains a proctored assessment and exam that ensures academic integrity and measures student learning.

- ✓ Utilizes, as the primary course text or as a wholly acceptable alternative, content, from the California Digital Open Source Library.
- ✓ Includes adaptive learning technology systems or comparable technologies that can significantly improve student learning.
- Collection, review, and publication of student success data for courses taken through the platform.
- Regular solicitation and consideration of input from students on implementation of the platform.
- Utilization of the state's common course numbering system for approved courses to simplify identification and articulation of comparable courses.

The legislation also reauthorizes the California Virtual Campus until January 1, 2017.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

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